



Preliminary Research Results
Partnership for Accessible
Reading Assessment
(PARA)

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Understanding Accessible Reading Assessment

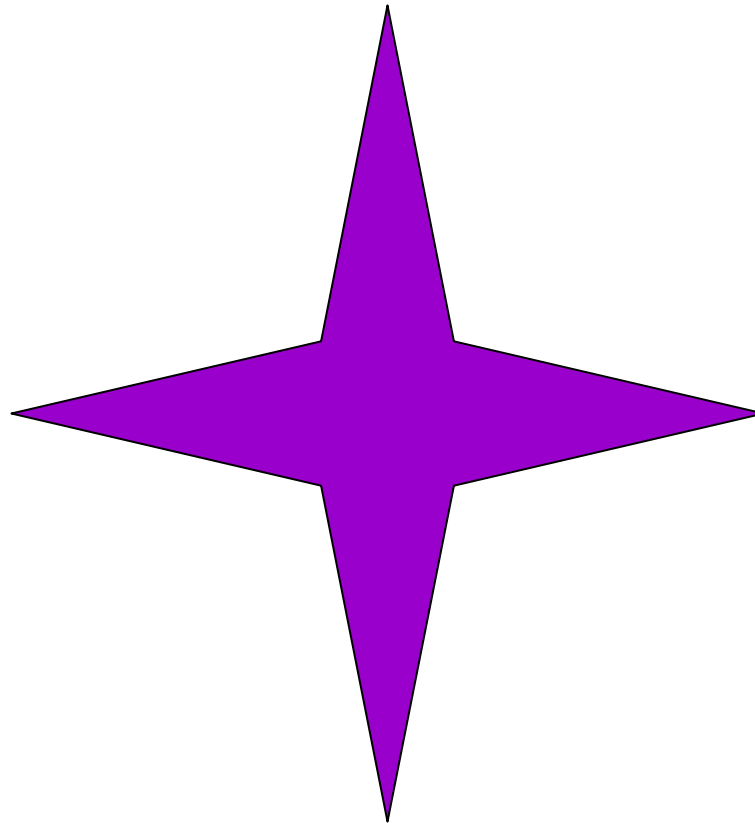
- **Requires a multi-disciplinary approach**
- **Involves a variety of methodologies, including:**
 - Policy review
 - Literature review
 - Extant data analysis
 - Expert opinion gathering
 - Surveys, questionnaires, interviews (including “think aloud” methods)
 - Experimental research



**Policy
Research**

**Disability
Research**

**Reading
Research**



**Assessment
Research**

Partnership for Accessible Reading Assessment



Policy Research

- Test Blueprints and Specifications require that states test comprehension and text analysis and interpretation more than foundational skills (Johnstone, Thurlow, & Moen, 2006).
- Most items (80%+) required by blueprints and specifications are multiple choice items (Johnstone et al., 2006).
- Some standards are not tested in state reading assessments (e.g., personal growth through reading and using reading and standards relating to research) (Thompson, Johnstone, Thurlow & Clapper, 2004).



Reading Research

- Practitioners and researchers define reading predominately as the act of comprehending or understanding text (Cline, Johnstone, & King, 2006).
- Comprehension skills are nuanced. Assessments do not always capture the complexity of comprehension, including how texts, tasks, and the reader intersect to impact understanding (Galda & Byrn, in press).
- Motivation may contribute substantially to a student's positive stance toward assessments, willingness to work on or complete particular items on assessments, and his/her ability to demonstrate knowledge of skills (O'Brien & Dillon, in press).



Assessment Research – DDF

- Our study results suggest that a substantial number of items from both the Reading Comprehension (RC) and Word Analysis (WA) subtests exhibit DDF for students with disabilities in grade 9.
- These items were more likely to be located in the second half of the assessments than the first half of the assessments.
- Results suggest that students with disabilities might be more randomly selecting one of the four response options rather than making an “educated guess.”



Assessment Research – DIF

- There were a greater number of items that exhibited Differential Item Functioning (DIF) for students with disabilities in Grade 9 than Grade 3. This was true for both RC and WA assessments.
- The Grade 9 items that were shown to exhibit DIF for students with disabilities were more likely to be located in the second half of these assessments (Abedi, Leon, & Kao, 2006).



Disability Issues

- Students with disabilities are a heterogeneous group, and different disabilities create different challenges for reading assessments.
- Accommodations that are necessary to access print for one group of students may be ineffective or inappropriate for another group (Thurlow, 2006).



Next Year's Research

- Are there students who are poorly assessed in current state assessments (i.e., their true knowledge, skills, and ability are not reflected)? If so, what are the characteristics of these students?
- What does an “accessible reading assessment” look like, and what principles should drive the development of reading assessments to ensure that they are accessible?
- Do accessible reading assessments validly capture student reading achievement?
- Are there scoring implications for different approaches to accessible reading?